CATALOGUES OF ART EXHIBITIONS ORGANIZED BY THE ARTS COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN REPUBLISHED ON MICROFICHE

Published on microfiche by:

Chadwyck-Healey Ltd
45 South Street
Bishops Stortford
Herts CM23 3AG
England

Somerset House
417 Maitland Avenue
Teaneck
New Jersey 07666
USA

Date of publication and production of master: 1975

Series: The purpose of this series is to make available those catalogues that have lasting interest through their text or their illustrations. Catalogues and cumulations of titles in the series are available from the publishers

Serial numbers: Each title is given a seven-figure serial number in the top right hand corner of the microfiche title strip. This is an accession number. The first figure indicates the number of the list in which the title first appears; the first three-figure group signifies the gallery or museum; the second three-figure group the accession number for that title.

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Technical data:

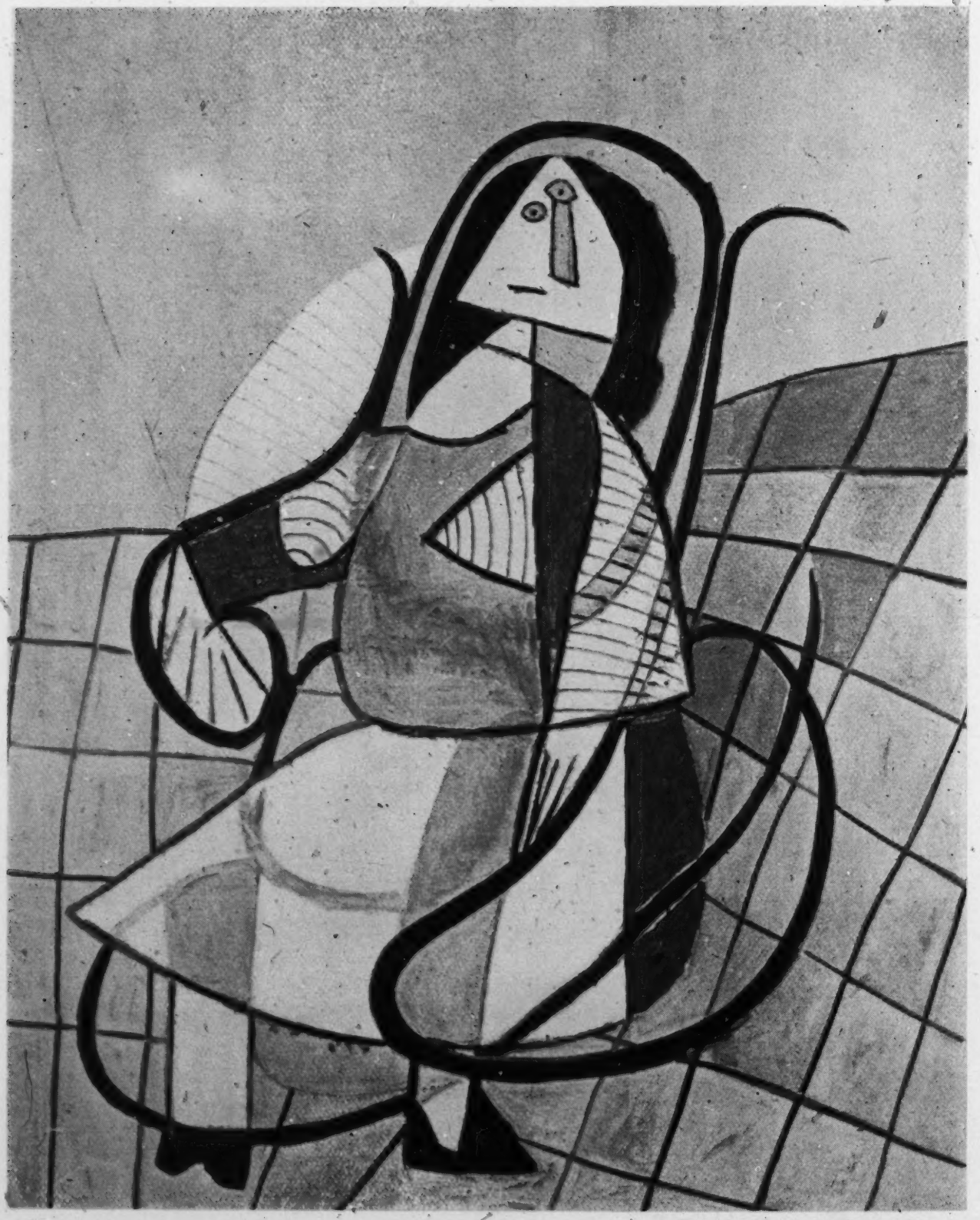
Producing laboratory: Micromedia Ltd, Kidlington, Oxford.

PICASSO
MATISSE
Exhibition

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With the consent of the Direction Générale des Relations Culturelles who organised this exhibition with the British Council in the first instance for its showing at the Victoria and Albert Museum, it has been possible to extend the loan of these pictures in order to make them available for two showings outside London. The exhibition is toured under the joint auspices of the British Council and the Arts Council of Great Britain, who are deeply grateful to the two artists, to the owners of pictures, and to the French Embassy for their assistance. We have to thank M. Zervos and M. Cassou for allowing us to reprint their introductions from the original catalogue. The preface by Mr. Philip James is substantially the text of a broadcast talk given on the Home Service.

The important canvas by Picasso entitled 'Night fishing at Antibes,' which is illustrated on Plate 1, was withdrawn at the request of the owner. Five works by Matisse had also to be returned at the close of the London exhibition.



From the collection of Christian Zervos.

Frontispiece. WOMAN AND ROCKING CHAIR (NO. 5) PICASSO

PICASSO

BETWEEN TWO CHARNEL HOUSES

IN the compositions painted by Picasso, between the charnel house of 'Guernica,' which was inspired by the massacres perpetrated by the Fascists in Spain, and the canvas started this year, inspired by the German extermination camps, we see more and more clearly those qualities and gifts with which fate has endowed the artist, a vision ever welling up from inexhaustible reserves, a daring that defies the future, an ardent love for his fellow men. Picasso is not only a great interpreter of reality, he is also a passionate lover of freedom, a freedom which makes it for ever impossible for him to submit to any conditions which go against the grain of his instincts.

There is no doubt that 'Guernica' is the most human and the most moving of Picasso's works, and the one in which his most intense feelings have been passionately engaged. I consider this painting the greatest pictorial poem of suffering not only of the suffering of individuals, nor the suffering of mutilated flesh, but the very essence of suffering, a suffering not confined to human beings but an intrinsic part of life, knowing nothing of vengeance, a suffering profoundly spiritual, greater than all other suffering, a hopeless suffering, a charred land where no fruit can grow, a suffering like that found in Calderon. It is suffering but it is not despair. In this vision of ultimate sadness appears a bird, a sign of vibrant life, and a bull, a majestic dreamer, in the fullness of strength freed from death, in possession of time and destiny.

Shakespeare said 'Our virtues lie in the interpretation of the time.' It is because he had the power to compel himself to reduce his awareness of the absolute to a temporal plane that Picasso, through the events and struggles of this time, has been conscious of so many of our greatest problems. That is as true of 'Guernica' as of the 'Charnel House' which he is painting at the moment, and in which, in the most incisive way, he represents humanity, glutted with murder, with hatred, chaos and affliction everywhere. All is calamity, beyond control or understanding.

In this new work as in ' Guernica,' he is not concerned with making an arid moral protest ; his aim is to show the terror of man at the sight of the many corpses that weigh on his heart, and the horror of disgust in the face of a world of murderers, of fire and filth, a world of ruins which ceaselessly reflects his own image covered with blood. His aim above all is to convey the mighty righteous anger of one who reaches desperately after liberty and refuses to bow to those forces which threaten it, which test human dignity by the basest means, and establish their rule through disaster.

I cannot in fairness say as yet if Picasso has retained enough hope to put in a corner of this picture some allusion to undying freedom, some image that will symbolise the idea that nothing essential can be lost, that freedom *always* reappears even among ruins—some form to express, that though bodily flesh may be destroyed, the forces of new life cannot be prevented from fulfilling their destiny. Unless the constant recurrence at such short intervals of disasters so great has convinced him that certain failings are a fundamental part of man's nature, and has clearly shown him that though our present sufferings will disappear, they will return again to encircle the globe from pole to pole.

This, however, is only surmise based on a few remarks of rending sadness overheard in a conversation and which spoke neither of the hope of carefree days, nor the belief in anything other than the boundless courage of the human animal in subsisting on griefs as appalling as they are absurd, and in enduring a martyrdom from which there is no relief.

In creating the forms of ' Guernica,' forms fully realised in a temporal sense, but nevertheless carried beyond reality, into the realm of poetry, Picasso initiated a new phase in painting whose departure from the conventional was so abrupt that it was regarded as an extravagant caprice.

This new phase in painting determines the whole series of compositions which have followed this work. These are no longer limited to the two impulses of terror and suffering—reactions appropriate to the great unhappiness of the age—painted violently and hurled in contempt at our senseless existence. In the midst of so much madness, these figures

convey the soothing power of everyday life. Yet the artist through the purity of his impressions places them between nothingness and eternity, between the soul and the body, between reality, in which they fully participate, and a magic lyricism which finally possesses the mind, developing at the same time our power of perception into something almost material. That is why there emanates from these familiar gestures a magic power which cannot be dissipated by explanations. These are in fact images, buried in the secret depths of the artist's mind and transformed into objects of rare imaginative power, a further sign of the spirit of revolutionary interpretation which Picasso has for ever in his blood.

There is nothing, in fact, in these forms which recalls an artist's attempt to catch the model's expression. If Picasso admires Greco's portraits, it is not because he is moved by their psychological insight but because of the strength of their genius. Picasso is essentially a great poet ; by that I mean that he is completely free to follow his own instinct in creating monsters which belong to the deepest dimension of dream. His latest compositions are beyond question the most truly monster-like figures in his whole work, more extraordinary than those of the Iberian-Negro or of the Cubist periods—weird creatures certainly, but yet not set utterly adrift in the world. Beneath the apparent disorder of their shapes, there is always the revolutionary order of life—the only perfect order possible. The lack of co-ordination between the various elements of a composition is only apparent. It is the result of substituting for the normal way of reasoning the reasoning of a man face to face with a dream, with the shadow of transient time and of death. Whatever Picasso's imaginative power, the two expressions, natural truth and imaginative truth, have for him the same degree of reality and always fuse in his work. Why then should we be surprised that these compositions, so permeated with the dream and logic of Picasso, still express the full truth of reality ?

All the compositions painted by Picasso in recent years are masterpieces of analysis and synthesis, and especially the one painted in 1937 of the woman shedding ' More tears than God could ever ask,' tears of blood which eat into her cheeks. Here you can see all the care taken by Picasso in the erection, if I may use the term, of this visage. If this is not

generally perceived, it is because those who like to weigh the evidence and to deduce from it a system have as yet not been able to appreciate even the superficial expression of an emotion whose deep significance can only be apprehended very much later. Otherwise they would immediately have been unanimous in recognising that Picasso has made a basic examination of all those things which surround us and which we see only as reflections and puzzles, and that he has understood the whole secret of the human machine in all its manifestations. If it seems otherwise, it is because the artist has transformed reality and advanced to the anatomical expression of shapes, as a poet forces and breaks up language until it yields the allusions he wants. It is a language suited to the genius of this art, where the frontiers of the mind, the margins of experience, all memories, are mobile, because they are a part of the great heritage of nature itself.

To put this idea more profoundly, this language of Picasso is the sap itself which rises from the deepest roots of his being. Never before has he been at the same time more Spanish and more Picassian ; rarely has he so successfully combined with the Spanish spirit and vision the lyrical richness and the prophetic claims of an artist whose poetic expression starts when he frees himself from emotion.

This explains why these figures, true in a supernatural way, are apt to be misunderstood. How could it be otherwise with works of art which force the onlooker to live in the time from which he seeks with ingenuity and by innumerable ways to escape, to accept a man who has renounced his will in order to enjoy the pure pleasure of dream and of truth, whose mind offers a proof of constant rejuvenation and of an inventiveness which knows neither interruption nor void ?

Instead of allowing ourselves to be disconcerted by these compositions, which, through their relationship both with the present and the future, anticipate the hopes of this time, we should consider it fortunate that Picasso has preserved the unsophisticated grandeur of primitive souls, and this is the reason for his strength and for his freedom to express everything as he understands it. We should above all strive to accustom our eyes to a light which to-day offends rather than flatters them.

CHRISTIAN ZERVOS.

Plate I. NIGHT FISHING AT ANTIBES. PICASSO *Not shown in the Exhibition*

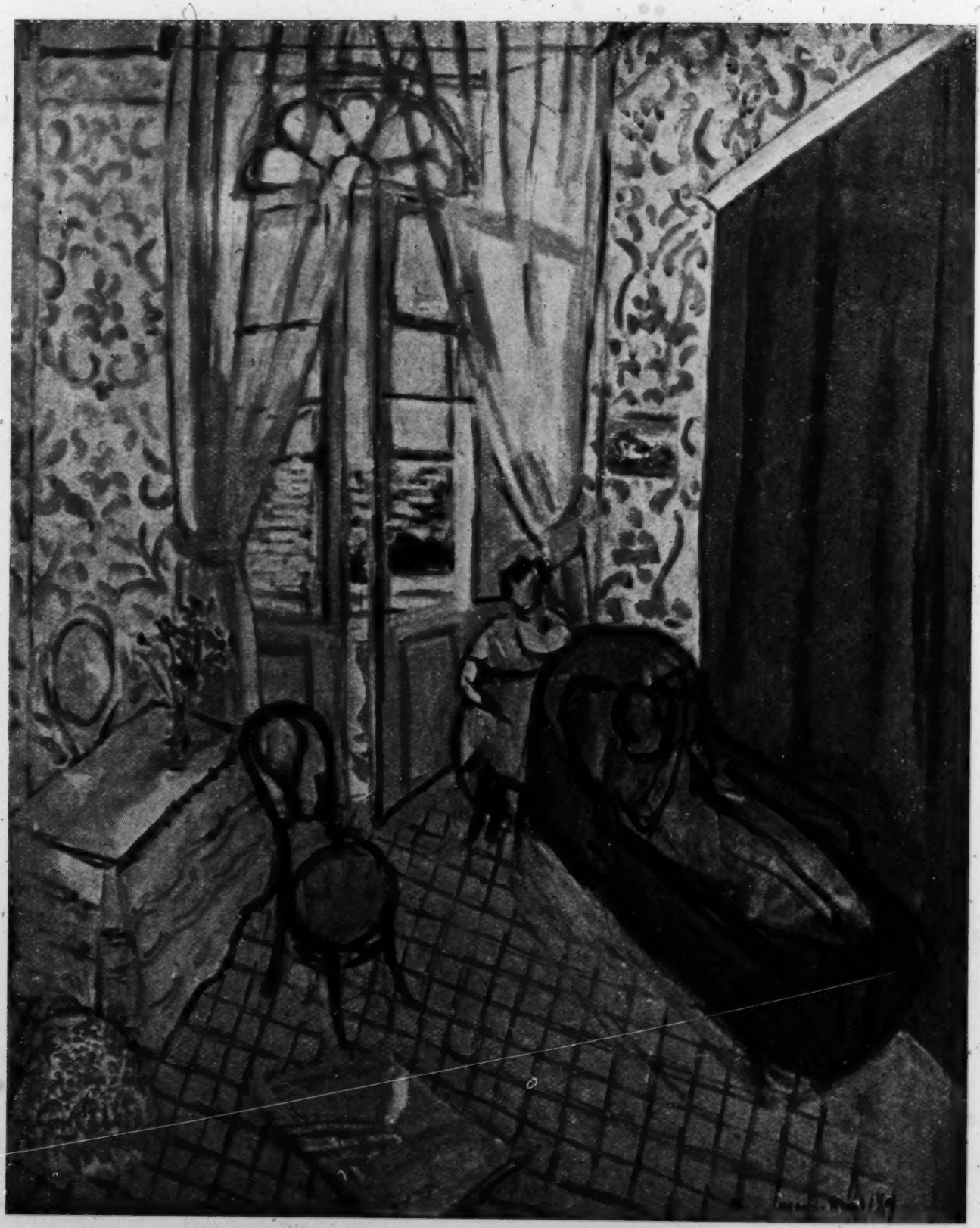


Plate 2. NUDE WOMAN IN RED ARM CHAIR (NO. 17) MATISSE

MATISSE

HENRI MATISSE is an outstanding representative of French thought. To speak of ' thought ' in connection with a painter might be most misleading; but in this case we are concerned with a French artist, that is to say, with a man (and this is particularly true of Matisse) who combines an active intellect with plastic gifts of a very high order. But we must not forget that the same miracle can be observed in Nicolas Poussin, Cézanne and Gauguin, and that Baudelaire found intellectual satisfaction in the works of Delacroix, Apollinaire, in the researches of the Cubists and Fauves and Paul Valéry. (In other words, M. Teste himself, supreme incarnation of the aspirations of the intellect, in the æsthetic attitude and plastic gifts of Degas.)

There was a time when Matisse's pictures reflected the opulent splendours of the external world, enhanced by and through the play of light : more recently his chief concern has been quietly and methodically to express this external reality in terms of pure symbols, plastic, elliptic, synthetic and well-balanced. His language from now on will be the language of line arabesques and pure colour harmonies. This deliberate simplification results in works which are not in the least abstract or schematic, but in which the full richness of reality is recaptured and implicit. The intensity of beauty that can be seen is matched here by the intensity of a mind that judges, selects, rules and governs itself. Within this limited field a rare plastic sense is continually manifested, effortless and wonderful. All the pleasures which one expects as a matter of course to derive from pictures are offered to us here, in this stern region of the intellect, munificently. Places and atmospheres from which hitherto we had expected to derive merely the lazy satisfaction of contemplation and sensuous delights—Nice, for example with its windows opening into a luxuriant paradise—the East, with its odalisques and the flowers of its carpets which rival the flowers in the vase—all these things satisfyMatisse's sovereign intelligence, to which they appear, not as a mere *décor*, but as the very substance of himself ; for, as has been observed by an expert

(*Continued on page* 8.)

PABLO PICASSO

1.	Woman with mandolin	May 1942
2.	Nude	30 September 1942
3.	Seated woman	Undated
4.	Pigeon and child	24 August 1943
5.	Woman and rocking chair	9 August 1943
6.	The window	3 July 1943
7.	The sailor	28 October 1943
8.	Woman in arm chair	19 July 1944
9.	Woman on sofa	18 April 1940
10.	Portrait of a lady	5 March 1940
11.	Woman with green dress	February 1940
12.	Child with crawfish	21 June 1941
13.	Woman—grey composition	5 March 1945
14.	Woman—grey composition	4 March 1945
15.	Small child with flower	6 March 1945
16.	Still life—skull with leeks	18 March 1945
17.	Seated woman	5 March 1940
18.	Royan	5 August 1940
19.	Window and bullock's head	3 April 1942
20.	Still life—with saucepan	16 February 1945
21.	Paris—La Cité	26 February 1945
22.	Basket and flower vase	August 1942
23.	Woman with fish hat	19 April 1942
24.	Still life—white background	6 August 1943

Lent by the Artist

HENRI MATISSE

Catalogue

1.	Goulfar (Belle-Isle-en-Mer)	1896
2.	Bevilaqua, study	1901
3.	Nôtre-Dame	1902
4.	View of Pont-St. Michel	1902
5.	Woman with stool	1912
6.	Cap d'Antibes	1925
7.	Odalisque	1928
8.	Nude	1928
9.	Ivy	1941
10.	Dancer in yellow arm chair, pink and blue tiles	1942
11.	Simone—black background golden harmony	1942
12.	Woman on red background	1942
13.	Still life—lemons and mimosa	1942
14.	The blue hat	1944

Lent by the Artist

15. Luxury
16. The painter in his studio
17. Nude woman in red arm chair
18. Woman reading—black background
19. Two young girls
20. Still life
21. Decorative composition

Lent by the Musée National d'Art Moderne

22.	Two women on a sofa	*M. Georges Renand*
23.	White dress	*M. Georges Renand*
24.	Woman on a sofa	*Mme. Paul Guillaume*
25.	Girl	*Galerie Druant-David*

Lent by Private Collectors

in this superior art, 'décoration becomes expression.' We find in these paintings an exquisite, dazzling and irresistibly seductive grace manifest in the invention of these creatures who take their place from now onwards in the gallery of women alongside the women of Watteau and Ingres. The women of Matisse, too, have their own secret and their own inalienable perfection.

To one seeking for a definition of French genius at its highest and most exquisite level we could not do better than introduce these charming messengers, fitting reward of an admirable career which we hope will be prolonged and which has been constantly and intentionally illuminated by the light of the mind.

JEAN CASSOU.

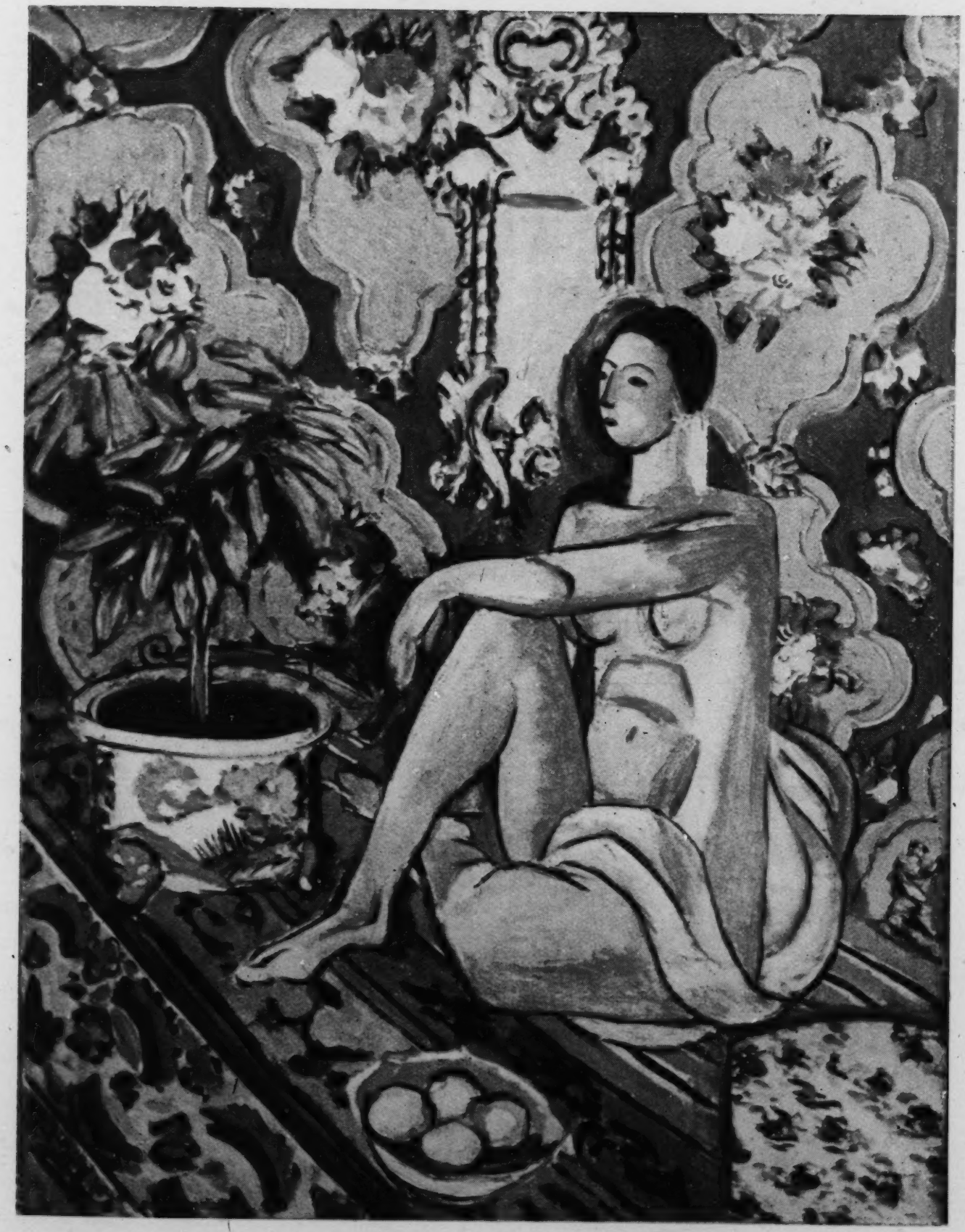


Plate 3. DECORATIVE COMPOSITION (NO. 21) MATISSE

Plate 4. WINDOW AND BULLOCK'S HEAD (NO. 19) PICASSO

PICASSO AND MATISSE

FOR nearly a thousand years the arts of France and Britain have been intertwined, two strands in the thread of European art. We have been supreme in literature and admirable in architecture ; France has always led in the visual arts of painting and sculpture. During the past six years those strands have been forced asunder but not broken. War could not destroy art because it could not destroy the spirit of man. So while, on the Continent, treasuries and churches were looted and blasted, and pictures were sent in waggon-loads to the Reich, men resisted and wrote and painted. Having buried our masterpieces in caves, we also turned in upon our own resources. But in the end a sense of claustrophobia oppressed us. I shall never forget that day in May when the National Gallery welcomed us back to see the first consignment of old masters proudly looking down from the war-scarred walls. That was indeed a breath of clean fresh air.

By this time the invisible barricades between England and France were falling one by one. First came literature, then drama, and now at last painting. The strands are twisted up once more. In November the British Council showed seven of our contemporary painters in Paris ; now, in association with the French authorities, they have brought thirty Matisses and twenty-five Picassos to this country.

Many of us have been waiting eagerly to see the work of the new young painters who have come to maturity during the war. But it is right that, at this precise moment in history, when the curtain falls on the last act of the European tragedy, the two greatest performers, those painters who have dominated the scene in European art for nearly forty years, should speak the epilogue. For the international school of Paris has produced its own great figures, not only Picasso and Matisse, but Rouault, Braque and Gris. Remember that they followed artists of the stature of Van Gogh, Gauguin, and Cézanne. It is a school that has given us its own scheme of beauty, a school which mirrors the spirit of the age as any sincere art form must.

It would be ridiculous to try to explain Matisse and Picasso in a few

words. In any case Picasso himself has so truly said : ' People who try to explain pictures are usually barking up the wrong tree.' I can only try to describe my own reactions as simply as possible.

First, we remember that a great artist has quite exceptional powers of invention and expression. Therefore he is in advance of his own age and has to wait for real appreciation. This is a commonplace of art history. Consider, for instance, Constable and Turner. Even Ingres was rebuked for inaccuracy. Manet and Degas were violently abused. Cézanne and the other post-impressionists were greeted with derision when they were first presented over here in 1910 by Roger Fry. Those who are seeing Picasso and Matisse in such force for the first time will remind themselves of this.

Then we observe that all the Picassos have been painted since 1939. On the other hand, Matisse begins with a grey seascape painted in 1896, when he was twenty-seven and still under the influence of Corot. Then we range through all his phases of rhythmic decoration. There are always a wonderful sense of pattern, an exquisite arabesque of lines and the richest harmonies of colour. These are his special gifts. We end with a group of about eight pictures which have also been done during the past four years. These last were painted near Nice in the luxuriant southern scene and dazzling Mediterranean atmosphere. They are perhaps the final effortless statement of his expressive themes. To my mind a little too effortless ; they merge on mere decoration.

On the other hand Picasso's works were all painted in Paris, most of them in the gloom of an occupied city. This is reflected in some figure-compositions painted entirely in sombre greys and black. He does not seem to have moved on to a new sharply defined period with its own incisive style. He seems rather to have developed the style in which he gave us one of the most moving and searing indictments of man's cruelty ever made in any medium : I mean the great mural commemorating the destruction by German bombs of the little Basque town of Guernica. It was shown in the Paris exhibition of 1937. In these present works, as in that mural, his departure from his previous conventions of style is abrupt and disconcerting. In the past Picasso has opened his mind with

astounding versatility to a wide number of stylistic influences—African masks, Negro sculpture, medieval stained glass, the drawings of Ingres (to show that he could draw as precisely as anyone else), the classical art of Greece and Rome. Then some of us saw recently those superb aquatints done as illustrations to Buffon's *Natural History*. Here, obviously, is the influence of Chinese art. He created cubism well before the first Great War, doing some *décor* for the Russian Ballet in this vein. Then he passed through and beyond abstraction and surrealism. Now he is the painter-poet of the world's suffering. His art is like Greek tragedy ; it expresses righteous anger, fear and horror and we are cleansed of these passions.

In the paintings of Matisse one gratefully soaks up an intensity of beauty. This is, however, the result of stern intellectual simplification and selection. Our senses are comforted and flattered by his seductive graceful women, the luxuriance of his flowers and fruit, all bathed in the rich glow of the Oriental colourings he has always loved, and painted with a swift, passionate gesture.

Picasso makes no concessions to our senses. He does not aim to give pleasure. Someone asked a distinguished living composer whether he liked one of his own works which had a certain astringency and harshness. 'I don't know whether I like it,' was the reply, 'but that was what I meant.' Picasso's painting is so full of meaning that it almost ceases to be painting. He has a power that does not seem so strange now in a world trembling at the liberation of atomic force. From this power his painting derives a monstrous quality. These new monster-like figures, sometimes of children, often of women, and of an unforgettable flayed ox-head, come of this age of murder, ruin and tyranny. They breathe not a spirit of vengeance but of infinite sadness. Their quality is so positive that they seem to be looking at us rather than we at them. They compel, fascinate, enchant, irritate and offend.

One other comparison must be made between our two painters. Matisse is typical of French painting and thought, with his elegance, intellect, *élan* and structural unity. Picasso is a Spaniard, and a highly subjective and romantic artist. He can be sentimental and cruel. He has many mannerisms and symbols which are very perplexing and irritating

to those unfamiliar with the images of medieval art. But these all come, subconsciously perhaps, from the background of his own native art. Thus the double head with both a frontal view and a profile, or the full view of an eye in a profile head are found in Spanish miniatures of the tenth century. His trick of placing several eyes in one head has a striking parallel in the amazing beasts in Catalan frescoes and manuscripts. Like El Greco he uses deliberate elongation for emotional purposes; he shares with many Spanish sculptures an exaggerated pathos; he inherits the power of his countryman Goya in his delineation of sheer, stark horror.

But the interpretation of art lies in ourselves. So, to make the most of the present opportunity let us rather listen again to Picasso's own words: 'Everyone wants to understand painting. Why don't they try to understand the songs of birds? Why are they content to love the night, a flower, everything around them, without seeking to understand such things? Whilst painting they must understand. They should first of all understand that the artist works from prime necessity; that he too is a prime element to which no more importance should be attached than to many other things in nature which charm us but which we do not explain to ourselves.'

We go then to taste and enjoy at this exhibition. The flavour will be bitter as well as sweet. We may well be seeing in the latest achievements of these two masters the end of an era in painting, an era built on the post-impressionist foundations laid by Cézanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh. Matisse has brought perfection to the management of colour as a constructive, emotional and decorative element. Picasso has given us a new type of vision, always inventing, experimenting, analysing. Where we go now, what new faith will inspire us, who will lead the way, what style will emerge, is more than we can guess.

PHILIP JAMES

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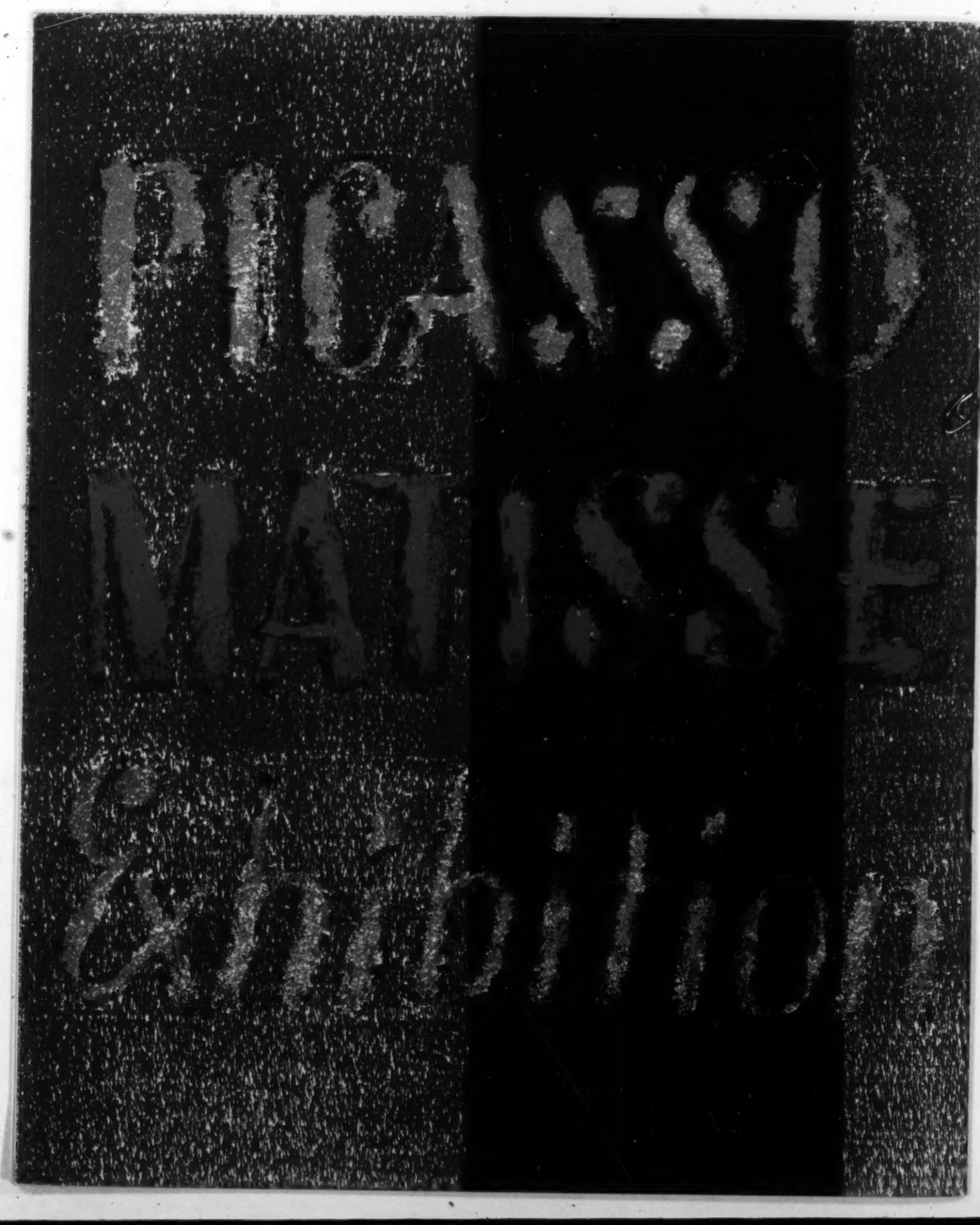
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